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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ARREST MADE IN CHARLES COUNTY SUBDIVISION ARSON

Baltimore, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Thomas M. DiBiagio announced that today Aaron Lee Speed, age 21, of Waldorf, Maryland was arrested on charges of arson in connection with the December 6, 2004 arson at the Hunters Brooke development located in Charles County, Maryland, in which at least ten homes were destroyed and numerous other homes were damaged. Speed will appear on federal charges before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in U.S District Court in Greenbelt, Maryland tomorrow morning.

The criminal charges are the result of an investigation coordinated by a task force which includes the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal and the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

Spread well over ten acres, the crime scene was examined by teams of investigators including nationally certified fire origin and cause experts from the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives National Response Team

(NRT), along with technicians and agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and detectives from the Charles County Sheriff's Office. Fire Investigators and specially trained K-9 units from the Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department, the Anne Arundel County Fire Marshal's Office, and the Fairfax County Virginia Fire and Rescue Department also rendered invaluable assistance. The Maryland State Police provided investigative staff along with crucial logistical support including their mobile command unit during the duration of the on-scene examinations. The on-scene operation was initiated while fire department units were still extinguishing the blazes and continued until late Friday evening, December 10, 2004.

The maximum penalty for arson is twenty years imprisonment.

The charges alleged are not a finding of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Donna Sanger and Timothy B. Atkins.